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# On the Origin of *Hänsel und Gretel*

## *An Excercise in the History of Fairy-Tales*

### *I*

The story of *Hänsel und Gretel* is one of the most popular of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (KHM 15). Yet despite this popularity, very little is known about its earlier history. According to expert opinion, the ancestry of the tale is 'unclear'[1]. Only the 'core theme' of its beginning, when the children are abandoned in the wood and leave a trail so as to find their way home, can be traced back to Perrault's story *Le Petit Poucet*[2]. Hence *Hänsel und Gretel* is classified as ATU 327A, next to *The Brothers and the Ogre* (ATU 327B)[3]. And only the children's answer to the question of the witch who is at the door can be positively ascribed to one of the Grimms' informants, namely Dortchen Wild[4].

In this article I will suggest that any attempt to find earlier full versions of *Hänsel und Gretel* will be in vain; that there is no eighteenth-century history of the tale as such, only of its constitutive parts. I will also suggest main authorship. There is no irrefutable evidence for these suppositions. They are based on my assessment of the text and context of the tale and in that sense they are open to debate. My approach, while aiming to research the events contributing to the story's production, is inspired by the works of Rudolf Schenda and Manfred Grätz, who argue that the eighteenth-century German fairy-tale tradition was primarily literary, built on the French *contes des fées*, both in the original French and in translation; that in the eighteenth century the concept of *Märchen* was not as refined as it became in the nineteenth century; and that in as far as there was an oral tradi-

[1] Scherf, Walter: Märchenlexikon. München 1995, 548; cf. Uther, Hans-Jörg: Nachweise und Kommentare. In: Brüder Grimm: Kinder und Hausmärchen 4. München 1996, 32–35.

[2] Scherf, Walter: Hänsel und Gretel. In: Enzyklopädie des Märchens 6. eds. Rolf Wilhelm Brednich et al. Berlin/New York 1990, 498–509.

[3] Uther, Hans-Jörg: The Types of International Folktales. A Classification and Bibliography. Based on the System of Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson vol 1. (FFC 284) Helsinki 2004, 212–214.

[4] Zipes, Jack: The Rationalization of Abandonment and Abuse in Fairy Tales: The Case of Hansel and Gretel. In: id.: Happily Ever After. Fairy Tales, Children and the Culture Industry. New York/London 1997, 41–42 mistakenly contributes the whole story to Dortchen Wild; see also id. (ed.): The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales. Oxford 2000, 225. Zipes' theory that the story describes the "social realities" of the time ignores the narrative history; every-day witches did not live in woods.

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tion it mainly concerned other genres such as legends and anecdotes[5]. They do not presume an inaccessible oral tradition, a veritable *horror vacui* for historians, and their perspective is therefore especially attractive, the more so because they point to a kind of history that can be studied. Both Schenda's and Grätz's underlying research is sound enough and when their conclusions also stand up, the transitions to nineteenth-century oral narratives will need renewed scrutiny; the old assumptions about orality will not apply any more. But even in documented history there are always gaps. No extensive records are available, for instance, of the way the Brothers Grimm collected their material and even less is known of how their informants acquired it.

This paper, then, is an attempt to reconstruct the history, or better: histories, of some fairy-tales, for it is necessary to look at more texts and types than just *Hänsel und Gretel*. Because the focus here is on the tale's origins, its subsequent development within the KHM and its reception outside it will only be dealt with provisionally. As I will be discussing the oldest available texts, *Hänsel und Gretel* should, strictly speaking, be called *Das Brüderchen und das Schwesterchen*[6], but that will be confusing since in the KHM's first edition of 1812/1813 a very similar title without the definite articles was given to another story, told by Marie Hassenpflug (KHM 11). Next to the premise of a literary fairy-tale tradition, I will entertain the notions of fairly reliable note-taking and of active informants who not only passed on stories but were also involved in formulating them. This implies that the editing of Wilhelm Grimm started only after the brothers wrote down a tale, that his first editorial interventions left the story-line intact and that it should be possible to discern the voices of his female informants within the texts.

## *II*

In the second volume of Edgar Taylor's English translation of the KHM, *German Popular Stories* (1826), *Hänsel und Gretel* was fused with Dortchen Wild's *Der liebste Roland* and Friederike Mannel's *Vom Fundevogel*[7]. Taylor continued this process of incorporation up to his last edition, *Gammer Grethel or German Fairy Tales, and Popular Stories* (1839), in which his text had also swallowed Marie Hassenpflug's *Brüderchen und Schwesterchen*. According to Martin Sutton, Taylor had "to undertake some massive excision and transplant surgery before the body of this story is fully formed"; he disagrees with the translator that it con-

[5] Grätz, Manfred: Das Märchen in der deutschen Aufklärung. Vom Feenmärchen zum Volksmärchen. Stuttgart 1988; Schenda, Rudolf: Von Mund zu Ohr. Bausteine zu einer Kulturgeschichte volkstümlichen Erzählens in Europa. Göttingen 1993.

[6] Rölleke, Heinz: Die älteste Märchensammlung der Brüder Grimm. Synopse der handschriftlichen Urfassung von 1810 und der Erstdrucke von 1812. Cologny-Genève 1975, 70 (no. 11).

[7] Opie, Iona and Peter: The Classic Fairy Tales. Oxford/New York 1974, 236f.

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cerned a "natural" process[8]. Nevertheless, the question remains as to the extent of Taylor's interference. For he was not the only one to link *Hänsel und Gretel* with Magic Flight stories, as both *Der liebste Roland* and *Fundevogel* are. In any nineteenth-century version where Gretel fails to kill the witch, the children have to flee and to prevent their pursuers from catching them. They normally do so by a series of metamorphoses[9]. In fact, the Grimms themselves noted down a version of *Hänsel und Gretel* 'from Hesse' (first published in the 1822 KHM annotations), in which Gretel spits on the floor in front of the hearth. Her spittle then answers the witch's questions about the water Gretel was asked to fetch for cooking her brother, which gives them time to get as far away as possible. When the spittle is dried up, the witch puts her skates on and sets out to catch the pair, but the girl changes herself into a pond and her brother into a duck and the witch bursts attempting to drink the pond[10]. Taylor did not have the approval of the Grimms to alter the text of his translation, but he almost certainly based it on this particular variant. As he wrote: "we had the amusement of some young friends principally in view, and were therefore compelled sometimes to conciliate local feelings and deviate a little from strict translation"[11]. In England witches had never been burnt.

In their turn the Grimms were so enthusiastic about Taylor's work, that they took his selection as the point of departure for their own more popular publication of fifty KHM stories (this particular number was in honour of the *Pentamerone*)[12]. By that time Wilhelm Grimm had already inserted the curious passage of the ferrying duck at the end of *Hänsel und Gretel*, following the Magic Flight version of the tale[13]. His witch had been toasted and without a pursuit he could not reasonably have Gretel performing her magic[14]. But he could, and did, use the image of

[8] Sutton, Martin: The Sin-Complex: A Critical Study of English Versions of the Grimms' "Kinder- und Hausmärchen" in the Nineteenth Century. Kassel 1996, 86f.; cf. id.: Englischsprachige Rezeption der Grimmschen Märchen im 19. Jahrhundert. In: Brüder Grimm Gedenken 12 (1997) 59–73; cf. Kamenetsky, Christa: The Brothers Grimm and Their Critics. Athens, Ohio 1992, 224.

[9] Bolte, Johannes/Polívka, Georg: Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- u. Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm 1–5. Leipzig 1913–32, here vol. 1, 116, refer to Brandenburg (Engelien-Lahn 1, 140; Friedel-Mielke 3, 226) and to Holstein (two texts recorded by Wilhelm Wisser); see Ranke, Kurt: Schleswig-holsteinische Volksmärchen 1. Kiel 1955, 229, 231 (no.s 1, 2).

[10] Brüder Grimm: Kinder- und Hausmärchen. 3: Originalanmerkungen, Herkunftsnachweise, Nachwort. ed. Heinz Rölleke. Stuttgart 1980, 96 [108]; also in Bolte/Polívka (above, note 9) vol. 1, 498f.

[11] Hartwig, Otto: Zur ersten englischen Übersetzung der Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm. In: Centralblatt für Bibliothekwesen 15 (1898) 1–16, esp. 6f. This essay contains the full texts of the exchange between the Grimms and their English translator.

[12] In spite of what the brothers hoped, Taylor's work did not immediately inspire fieldwork – Jacob's references were to medieval narratives anyway. The booklet did, however, prompt another publisher to issue Popular Tales and Romances of the Northern Nations 1–3. London 1823, comprising translations of stories by Tieck, Musäus, Goethe and de la Motte Fouqué.

[13] See the second edition: Brüder Grimm: Kinder- und Hausmärchen. Berlin $^{2}$1819, 87.

[14] cf. Wesselski, Albert: Versuch einer Theorie des Märchens. Reichenberg 1931, 144.

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the duck in the pond[15]. Whether this image was, as Christine Goldberg wrote, "both traditional and typical", is open to debate[16]. If one agrees that the duck in the tale owes its existence to Wilhelm's editing, then all later versions in which it figures including those with swans, are dependent on it[17].

Although the Grimms were clearly familiar with the notion of variants, as their annotations show in abundance, the idea of a tale type was still alien to them. They, as well as some of their followers, connected *Hänsel und Gretel* to Magic Flight stories (since Aarne classified under no. 313), more especially to those with a metamorphosis flight[18]. Ideally a story's direct ancestry should be found within the same type. Here, however, it may be fruitful not just to look at the beginning of the story, but also at its ending and to consider *Hänsel und Gretel* in the context of Magic Flight stories, or even as a Magic Flight itself.

## *III*

The central episode of Magic Flight stories is the meeting of a boy and a girl, usually lovers, in the abode of a cannibal. In most cases the girl already lives there and she helps the boy escape, sometimes after having assisted him to perform tasks. This story type is overrepresented in the KHM: the last, 1857 edition includes six versions in the main text alone; another, *Der Okerlo*, related to Jacob Grimm by Jeanette Hassenpflug, had been part of the 1812 edition but was discontinued in 1819. Beyond showing that Magic Flight versions do not necessarily have to incorporate a magical flight, *Die wahre Braut* (KHM 186) and *Der Trommler* (KHM 193) are of little relevance here because of their late date, 1842 and 1838 respectively – in the last story the witch is pushed into the fire, too. The dialect version of *Die beiden Künigeskinner* (eventually KHM 113), sent to Wilhelm Grimm by Ludowine von Haxthausen, was only included in the second, 1815 volume of the KHM. The earliest versions, however, were all part of the first volume and they deserve most attention here. Next to *Vom Fundevogel* (KHM 51) and *Der Okerlo* (no. 70 in the 1812 edition), it concerns *Die Wassernix* (KHM 79) by Marie Hassenpflug and *Der liebste Roland* (KHM 56) by Dortchen Wild. These four texts all descended from either Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy's *L'oranger et l'abeille*, first published in 1697, or its predecessor, Giambattista

[15] Artists found this problematic and either had to magnify the duck or to shrink the children. The painting in De Mont, Pol/De Cock, Alfons: Vlaamsche volksvertelsels. Zutphen 1925, facing p. 64 represents the children standing on two ducks each.

[16] Goldberg, Christine: Gretel's Duck: The Escape from the Ogre in AaTh 327. In: Fabula 41 (2000) 42–51, cit. 43.

[17] The Flemish version of De Mont and De Cock (above, note 15) which Goldberg (above, note 16) sees as representing oral tradition is a combination of a story from Aalst, published in Volkskunde 5 (1892) 107f. and itself derived from the KHM, and a text from Welle based on a French story.

[18] cf. Antti Aarne's posthumous publication: Die magische Flucht. Eine Märchenstudie (FFC 92). Helsinki 1930, 18: "[...] das Märchen von Hänsel und Gretel ist in das Märchen von der magischen Flucht übergegangen". This suggests separate instead of interrelated types.

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Basile's *Rosella*, first published in the 1630s in his *Cunto de li cunti*, written in Neapolitan dialect and better known by the title of the 1674 edition, *Il Pentamerone*. This was primarily a literary story, going back to medieval versions of the Quest of the Argonauts to Kolchis[19]. In the course of the story's evolution, Medea's magical assistance was transplanted from the sequence about the slaying of the guardian of the Golden Fleece to their flight afterwards[20]. Around 1500, in the Italian *Mambriano*, the theme of the fattening of the captured prince was introduced (his blood was needed to cure the princess' father). And while Basile closely followed this Italian example, d'Aulnoy changed the magical flight into a metamorphosis flight (probably after Straparola's *Maestro Lattantio*).

*Der Okerlo* (Oker = ogre) by Jeanette Hassenpflug was a simplified version of d'Aulnoy's *L'oranger*, translated into German as *Der Pommeranzbaum und die Biene*[21]. Dortchen Wild's *Der liebste Roland*, although more freely put together, was closely linked to this tradition, too. In 1801 d'Aulnoy's story had appeared in German adaptation in the anonymous *Feen-Mährchen*, but in all probability the girls used the *Idyllen* by Johann Heinrich Voß of the same year, as only the last publication featured the witch drinking from the pond[22]. In the course of this literary transmission the camel on which the lovers escaped in the French version disappeared, which is another indication that d'Aulnoy's text was not used directly. While she probably adapted the main elements of her tale from the Hassenpflug sisters, Dortchen certainly told her tale to Wilhelm in German; she amended the end of her version when she made the witch become trapped in a thornbush and dance to her death[23].

The two oldest Magic Flight tales in the KHM are *Vom Fundevogel* and *Die Wassernix*, by Friederike Mannel (who lived in Allendorf with her father, the local pastor) and Marie Hassenpflug, respectively[24]. They not only resemble each other, but also a hand-written notation by Clemens Brentano, in which the boy has to accomplish certain assignments and forgets the forester's daughter the moment

[19] For this and the following description I am indebted to Clausen-Stolzenburg, Maren: Märchen und mittelalterliche Literaturtradition. Heidelberg 1995, 239–262; Puchner, Walter: Magische Flucht (AaTh 313sqq.). In: Enzyklopädie des Märchens 9. eds. Rolf Wilhelm Brednich et al. Berlin/New York 1999, 13–19 largely omits the (literary) history.

[20] cf. Goldberg, Christine: The Forgotten Bride. In: Fabula 33 (1992) 39–54, esp. 52 who, following Aarne (above, note 18), considers the magical elements in the flight an "addition to the tradition" rather than as part of the changing tradition itself.

[21] Bierling, Friedrich Immanuel: Das Cabinet der Feen 3. Nürnberg 1762 (reprinted 1781), no. 19, also in the Blaue Bibliothek aller Nationen 3. Gotha 1790, no. 8. The latest German publication in Uther, Hans-Jörg: Märchen vor Grimm. München 1990, no. 25.

[22] "Der Riesenwald" in the "Feen-Mährchen" was an off-shoot of an earlier, 1779, publication of Voß's "Riesenhügel", see Grätz (above, note 5) 218, 319; cf. Wesselski, Albert: Der Riesenwald. In: Deutsche Märchen vor Grimm. Einführung und Anmerkungen. Brünn/München/Wien 1942, 49–55.

[23] cf. ATU 592: The Dance among Thorns, sometimes told about Jews. Included in the second volume of the KHM (1815) as no. 24 (1857: KHM 110): Der Jud im Dorn, from an early-seventeenth-century poem and a shrovetide play. An oral version from Hesse came possibly from the Wild family (see Bolte/Polívka [above, note 9] vol. 2, 490).

[24] Rölleke (above, note 6) no. 26 and 284f. (no. 47).

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he reaches his own home[25]. In *Fundevogel* these elements are missing and replaced with references to Runge's *Machandelboom*: the girl is called Lehnchen and the boy is designed to be boiled. In *Die Wassernix* the boy is only given one task, namely to cut a tree with a blunt axe; the girl is ordered to fetch water. These are nevertheless elements which do not stem from d'Aulnoy's story. Instead, the tasks and the forgotten bride were taken from *La palomma* in Basile's *Pentamerone*. Although Friederike and Marie may have heard about this book, they did not possess it themselves. *Rosella*, however, where a forgotten bride episode also occurs, was one of the few *Pentamerone* stories translated into French; it was published in the *Bibliothèque universelle des romans* of 1777. *La palomma* was not. The Grimms searched long and wide for Basile's work and were only able to buy their own copy in mid 1812; until then they had to borrow it from the library in Weimar, which they only managed in June 1811[26]. Brentano, on the other hand, owned an Italian translation but refused to lend it as he needed it for his own fairy-tale book. The *Pentamerone* was clearly not available in Kassel at that time – had the Hassenpflugs had a copy on their shelves, they would have lent it to the Grimms. How could it have been cited in Allendorf?

Friederike Mannel may have learnt about the ingredients for *Fundevogel* in several ways, either directly from Brentano when he discussed his plans in Allendorf, or, what is more likely, from his estranged young wife Auguste Bußmann, who in 1808 and 1809 stayed long periods at the Allendorf rectory with her husband's copy of the *Pentamerone*. In one of his letters to his brother Jacob Wilhelm complained that he couldn't even have a look at Clemens's collection of Italian tales ("ich glaube Conti degli conti oder mille conti"), because his wife always had them and possibly wanted to translate them[27]. Friederike sent her stories to the Grimms in Kassel precisely in this period and her writings also contained other tales from the Neapolitan collection[28]. She had no active command of her repertoire and had to dig into her memory to retrieve the stories. As she wrote to Jacob: "Clemens has already ferreted them all out of my mind."[29]

The obstacle flight, which Marie Hassenpflug also incorporated in her *Wassernix* stands outside the Magic Flight tradition as it had developed up to the 1800s, although there are several instances of it in other *Pentamerone* stories[30]. These traces of the *Pentamerone* in Marie's stories, some of which had not appeared in the partial French translation, may be explained by her visit to Allendorf, in Feb-

[25] id.: Neun Volksmärchenskizzen Clemens Brentanos. In: Fabula 18 (1977) 105–116, esp. 112f.
[26] Uther, Hans-Jörg: Nachwort. In: id. (ed.): Brüder Grimm: Kinder und Hausmärchen 3. München 1996, 215f.
[27] Letter of 16 September 1809. In: Briefwechsel zwischen Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm aus der Jugendzeit. ed. Wilhelm Schoof. Weimar 1963, 144.
[28] Clausen-Stolzenburg (above, note 19) 391f.: KHM 3: Marienkind and KHM 85: Die Goldkinder; see also Marquardt, Ulrike: Neu aufgefundene Bildnisse Grimmscher Märchenbeiträgerinnen. In: Brüder Grimm Gedenken 4 (1984) 120–125.
[29] Bolte/Polívka (above, note 9) vol. 4, 434.
[30] cf. Scherf (above, note 1) 326. The motif also featured in Hamilton's "Fleur d'Epine", of which German translations appeared in 1744 and in 1777. Here a thrown pebble becomes a wall and a drop of water a stream; cf. Grätz (above, note 5) 46, 78.

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ruary 1810, shortly before she related her story to Jacob. At that point both young women were involved in the brothers' project and they surely talked about fairy-tales with each other (by then Auguste had already left for Berlin). If the obstacle flight was part of Marie's tale from the start and not added by one of the Grimms, she will also have been inspired by Wilhelm who during that time was working on his translation of old Danish songs. For Marie's obstacles all turned into mountains, reminiscent of a passage in the medieval *Gesta Danorum* (5,13) by Saxo Grammaticus[31]. Her own working of the material is certainly born out by her inclusion of the children falling into the well, which she derived from *Frau Holle* – which in its turn was grafted on Charles Perrault's *Les fées*[32].

## *IV*

The number of stories circulating in Germany which the Grimms considered as suitable for inclusion in their collection was limited. Contemporary authors had only managed to find a handful and usually not because they tapped into any oral tradition. The brothers' admired example Philipp Otto Runge had only written down two tales. His *Von den Fischer un syne Fru* was more a Christian morality tale than a magical story (the wish-granting fish is foremost a Christian symbol and far removed from the animal helpers in other fairy-tales). It may have circulated orally, but it can ultimately be traced back to an adaptation by Christoph Martin Wieland of a story by the sixteenth-century Italian writer Straparola, where a wish-granting fish performs together with a princess who wants a castle. In Wieland's 1778 rendering the fisherman has kept some of his foolishness and the princess' vanity has been enlarged to the greediness of the wife[33]. Runge's *Van den Machandel=Bohm* dated at least from the late Middle Ages and had been distributed as a song text; it was nevertheless more a rhyming riddle with anecdotal additions than anything else[34]. Both tales were not precisely children's stories and neither were they fairy-tales in the contemporary sense of *Feenmährchen*; Runge called them 'Löögschen' (lies) and 'Döhnchen' (a Low German word currently used for anecdotes, formerly meaning 'tune')[35].

[31] Saxo Grammaticus: The History of the Danes. Trans. Peter Fischer, ed. Hilda Ellis Davidson. Cambridge 1979, 153; Aarne (above, note 18) 9f.

[32] The version of the 1812 KHM volume was told by Dortchen Wild, who primarily related a story published previously by Benedikte Naubert, in her Neue Volksmärchen der Deutschen 1. Leipzig 1789, framed by "Der kurze Mantel".

[33] The connection to Wieland's "Pervonte" is not generally recognized because the Italian story is classified as ATU 675, see Grätz (above, note 5) 166; cf. Wesselski, Albert: Märchen des Mittelalters. Berlin 1925, 235f., who refers to similar medieval plots without the particular content.

[34] cf. Moser, Dietz-Rüdiger: Verkündigung durch Volksgesang. Berlin 1981, 260–262; Rosenfeld, Hellmut: Review of M. Belgrader's dissertation about "Machandelbaum". In: Zeitschrift für Volkskunde 80 (1984) 131–133.

[35] Rölleke, Heinz: Von dem Fischer un syner Fru. Die älteste schriftliche Überlieferung. In: Fabula 14 (1973) 112–123, esp. 115.

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Other contemporaries, less favoured by the Grimms, hardly offered more material. Their namesake Albert Ludwig Grimm mentioned *Aschenpittchen* (Cinderella), the *Lebkuchenhäuschen* and *Schneewittchen* in the foreword of his *Kindermährchen* from the autumn of 1808, which were all previously published stories. His *Hans Dudeldee* was his own version of Runge's Fischer[36], and although he presented the *Drey Königssöhne* (appropriated in the KHM as no. 62: *Die Bienenkönigin*) as his memory of a folktale, he had oriented it on a *Volksbuch*. Yet another author, the librarian Johann Gustav Büsching, published five childrens' stories (*Kindermährchen*) which included the two by Runge. The other three consisted of a humorous tale[37], a story similar to d'Aulnoy's *La chatte blanche*, and a convoluted tale which Jacob Grimm thought to be derived from a French book[38]. Earlier authors such as Johann Karl August Musäus and Benedikte Naubert elaborated local historical legends and integrated them into foreign stories. Musäus, who named his work *Volksmährchen der Deutschen* (1782–87), primarily wrote to supplement his teacher's income and tuned in to the then popularity of the French *Feenmährchen* – the reference to the *Volk* foremost indicated that the stories had acquired a German setting and German characters; orality hardly entered the equation. Naubert's project was merely a continuation of Musäus, as her title *Neue Volksmährchen der Deutschen* (1789–93) indicates. The few other story books in existence all exhibit similar characteristics: they either contained editions of French material, incorporated French stories in a larger German setting or were more or less translated. Fairy-tales, whatever their precise German equivalent was, had to be scraped together.

The Grimms experienced this conundrum when they started their collection. In 1809, after working on it for almost two years, Wilhelm feared that they had exhausted their supply. Recuperating in Halle for several months, he wrote to Jacob that he had come across a few *Kindermährchen*, only he was already familiar with them. Runge, so he had heard, did not know any other stories either. Jacob only partially agreed: the crux was in the detail and that was what they needed to uncover and to write down[39]. The following years they set out to do precisely that, with a little help of their friends.

[36] id.: Grimm, Albert Ludwig. In: Enzyklopädie des Märchens 6. eds. Rolf Wilhelm Brednich et al. Berlin/New York 1990, 168, calls this version 'independent' from Runge but may be mistaken since A.L. Grimm confessed to editing the story: "nach eigener Umformung bearbeitet".

[37] A version of ATU 1535: Unibos.

[38] It concerned the Italian predecessor of the d'Aulnoy tale with a frog instead of a cat (see Wesselski [above, note 14] 132–134), and a version of "Three Hairs of the Devil's Beard" (a slight misnomer). The last had appeared in the 1790s as a Czech booklet, cf. Rölleke, Heinz: Das Grimmsche Märchen "Der Teufel mit den drei goldenen Haaren". KHM 29 und seine Spuren. In: Märchenspiegel 6 (1995) 74–76; Röhrich, Lutz: Der Vogel Gryf – Ein alemannisches Märchen. In: id.: "Und weil sie nicht gestorben sind ..." Anthropologie, Kulturgeschichte und Deutung von Märchen. Köln/Weimar/Wien 2002, 298–309.

[39] Briefwechsel (above, note 27) 119, 122.

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## V

The KHM were composed in stages. Before becoming interested in stories, Jacob and Wilhelm collaborated with Clemens Brentano and Achim von Arnim on their collection of songs *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (1805–08). Because Brentano wanted to follow the song book with one of fairy-tales, the Grimms started on story texts. Brentano, however, never quite finished this project and his book was only published posthumously in 1846. But he kept the texts the brothers had sent him[40]. This allows some insight in the pre-publication period of the KHM, despite the fact that the brothers destroyed their own notes, at least those they had taken from the interviews with their female informants[41]. They never meant the names of their contributors to be published. Instead they linked the tales to the land. Authorship was irrelevant, especially since the stories were supposed to contain pieces of age-old mythology and to be products of an organic, natural process.

The *Urfassung* comprised fifty-three stories – compared to the eighty-six published tales in the first edition – and one fourth came from published sources. Most of the other forty were recorded from the brothers' acquaintances in Kassel, that is to say the daughters of the families Hassenpflug and Wild, who were friends of their sister Lotte (mother Wild also contributed two tales). The other two 'oral' sources consisted of contacts of Brentano: an anonymous woman in Marburg and the daughter of the parish priest in Allendorf, Friederike Mannel (born in 1783). It took three years to collect the approximately thirty tales from the Hassenpflug and Wild families (not every story can be ascribed to a particular person with certainty) and this only concerned the first KHM phase, leading up to the texts for Brentano. The sisters did not possess a set repertoire and their stories were not readily available to be written down.

In 1807, at the start of their collecting, Jacob Grimm was twenty-two years of age (he was born in January 1785) and Wilhelm was a year younger (born in February 1786)[42]. Gretchen Wild, one of their first 'informants' was again a year younger than Wilhelm and at that point unmarried. After she found a husband, she became impossible to handle, at least according to Jacob[43]. Gretchen's older sister Lisette was born in 1782; she only contributed a few stories (among them a *Rumpelstilzchen* variant) and these were replaced in later editions. Of the Wild sisters, Dortchen was by far the most important storyteller. She was born in May 1793 and still only nineteen when the first KHM volume appeared with at least a dozen of her stories, most of which she told to Wilhelm Grimm between late 1810 and late 1812, that is to say in the second stage of the composition of the KHM when

[40] Rölleke (above, note 6) esp. 390–397.
[41] The texts they recorded from Johann Friederich Krause in 1811 are preserved, see Breslau, Rolf: Der Nachlaß der Brüder Grimm 1. Wiesbaden 1997, 636, C 1,3; cf. Fink, Gonthier-Louis: The Fairy Tales of the Grimms' Sergeant of Dragoons J.F. Krause as Reflecting the Needs and Wishes of the Common People. In: McGlathery, James M. (ed.): The Brothers Grimm and Folktale. Urbana/Chicago 1991, 146–163.
[42] These and the following biographical data are taken from Rölleke (above, note 6).
[43] Briefwechsel (above, note 27) 161: "[...] die hat es mit nichts zu tun als ihrem Mann und scheut sich wie die meisten Weiber über die Schreibfehler".

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the brothers had begun to record stories for their own publication – in 1825 Dortchen was to marry Wilhelm Grimm.

Marie was the oldest of the Hassenpflug sisters, born in December 1788, thus around twenty years old when she was actively telling stories. Jeanette, who would call herself Hanne the moment the French left Kassel, was born in June 1791; their sister Amalie in January 1800 – and their brother Ludwig would later enter wedlock with Lotte Grimm (born in 1793). According to Ludwig Hassenpflug the interest of his sisters and their friends in Goethe, ancient poetry and fairy-tales had begun as a common conversation piece in 1808. This developed into a regular circle, whose members usually met at the house of the Grimms in the Marktstraße, opposite the apothecary of Rudolf Wild, where the brothers Grimm lived with their sister – their father had died in 1797 before they came to Kassel and their mother in May 1808. These meetings, described by Ludwig as 'merry'[44], were likely to have been the laboratory where many of the KHM stories germinated.

It has long been suggested that the Hassenpflug and Wild sisters had in their turn heard the stories from their 'nursemaids, governesses and servants'[45]. This is part of an attempt to ascribe fairy-tales to elderly women of the lower classes (peasants were preferable but they were scarce in a residential town such as Kassel). The Wilds were young and middle-class, the Hassenpflugs belonged to the same generation and were connected to the court of the then ruling king Jérôme Bonaparte, where Jacob was employed as librarian. At least in the early stages of the KHM, there is no evidence of other suppliers than young, mostly single, educated women[46]. Next to the Wild and Hassenpflug sisters there were women such as Wilhelmine von Schwertzell, born in 1790; the sisters Engelhard of whom the eldest, Karoline was born in 1786 (they participated in the 1808 meetings), the sisters Julia and Charlotte Ramus, born in 1792 and 1793; Lulu Jordis (a sister of Clemens Brentano), born in 1787; and 'little' Johanna and Amalie Henschel, all living in Kassel. Even if they did not contribute many stories, they do represent the pool from which the Grimms drew their 'oral' material[47].

[44] Rölleke (above, note 6) 391.

[45] Zipes, Jack: When Dreams Came True. New York/London 1999, 69f.; id.: The Brothers Grimm. From Enchanted Forests to the Modern World. New York/Basingstoke [2]2002, 28; see also Kamenetsky (above, note 8) 117, 119, who maintained that the Grimms' female informants "had a great perception for oral tradition" and "had absorbed it from the German environment".

[46] Dorothea Viehmann, whom the Grimms interviewed during the summer of 1813, is the exception rather than the norm. I will formulate my thoughts about her repertoire elsewhere; cf. Lauer, Bernhard: Dorothea Viehmann und die Brüder Grimm. In: Märchenspiegel 9 (1998) 36–42. The women from the Bökendorf circle, however, more than fit the profile, cf. Tiggesbäumker, Günter: Haus Bökendorf und die Brüder Grimm. In: Märchenspiegel 10 (1999) 10f.

[47] Lulu Jordis contributed the second piece of "Frau Füchsin", cf. Bolte/Polívka (above, note 9) vol. 1, 362; one of the Henschel sisters told a version of "Der junge Riese", cf. Bolte/Polívka 2, 146. Karoline Engelhard did not know much, as Jacob wrote, see Schoof (above, note 27) 152, which implies that he asked her. According to Rölleke the 'Min', who on 20 October 1811 contributed "Gevatter Tod" should be read 'Mie', and

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The one elderly candidate, the 'old Marie', presumably a maid in the Wild household, turned out to be Marie, the eldest Hassenpflug sister, as Heinz Rölleke convincingly proved[48]. Why did the Grimms never take any notes from elderly lower-class women if these were known to be excellent storytellers? When it came to interviewing the woman in Marburg, they initially sent their sister Lotte (about sixteen years old at the time)[49]. And it was Hanne Hassenpflug who recorded a version of *Tischlein deck dich* from an old lady she met at the Henschels. Neither of these elderly women appeared to have possessed something that even resembled a repertoire of oral fairy-tales. Instead, their three stories were all available in print[50].

The reminiscence of Ludwig Hassenpflug is one of the few indications of the existence of a literary circle involving the Grimms before 1810. Only slightly more is known about a similar, later group, which, according to Jacob Grimm in September 1812, met every Friday from the winter of 1811/1812 onwards[51]. Notwithstanding a lack of full reports, it is clear that the participants of the groups were the same people who provided the Grimms with stories. And they did not just discuss existing literature but also contributed their own attempts at prose or poetry. It is, however, unlikely that the Grimms made notes during these sessions. Tales may have been selected or conceived for the occasion, they may have been exchanged, but they were only recorded afterwards. This is evident from the dates Wilhelm Grimm noted in his own KHM copy and from the place where he met Dortchen: in the garden (on 29 September and 11 October 1811, both Sundays)[52]. She told Wilhelm *Der liebste Roland* on Monday 19 January 1812 in a summer house in a garden in Nentershausen (where her sister Hanne lived). Only in these contexts can the stories be considered oral.

is thus one of the Wild sisters, rather than Wilhelmine Schwertzel, cf. Bolte/Polívka 1, 377; on the Ramus sisters see Marquardt (above, note 28).

[48] Rölleke, Heinz: Die 'stockhessischen' Märchen der 'alten Marie'. Das Ende eines Mythos um die frühesten KHM-Aufzeichnungen der Brüder Grimm. In: Germanisch-romanische Monatschrift N.S. 25 (1975) 74–86. English translation: The "Utterly Hessian" Fairy Tales by "Old Marie": The End of a Myth. In: Bottigheimer, Ruth B. (ed.): Fairy Tales and Society. Philadelphia 1986, 287–300. Later he slightly retracted this and suggested that Marie Müller, who was a servant in the Wild household, could have told some tales to the girls and at least have been a possible indirect contributor to the KHM; see Rölleke, Heinz: Neue Erkentnisse zum Beiträgerkreis der Grimmschen Märchen. In: Röhrich, Lutz/Lindig, Erika (eds.): Volksdichtung zwischen Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit. Tübingen 1989, 83–91, esp. 87f.; see also Bluhm, Lothar: A New Debate about "Old Marie"? Critical Observations on the Attempt to Remythologize Grimms' Fairy Tales from a Sociohistorical Perspective. In: Marvels & Tales 14 (2000) 287–311.

[49] cf. Rölleke, Heinz: 'Die Marburger Märchenfrau'. Zur Herkunft der KHM 21 und 57. In: Fabula 15 (1974) 87–94.

[50] The history of the magic table has not been properly investigated yet. Earlier versions appeared in the "Pentamerone" and in Villeneuve's "Histoire du roi Santon" (1745). "Cinderella" was known through Perrault; "Goldvogel" had been published in the Kindermährchen by Christoph Wilhelm Günther (1787); see Grätz (above, note 5) 204.

[51] Letter to Achim von Arnim (26 September 1812), see Steig, Reinhold: Achim von Arnim und Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm. Stuttgart/Berlin 1904, 221.

[52] Rölleke (above, note 6) 345; Bolte/Polívka (above, note 9) vol. 1, 207: Frau Holle; 1, 335: Hansens Trine.

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When young people regularly gathered to discuss literature and poetry and to tell each other stories, they will have done so on a more or less equal basis. It would be presumptuous to assume a division between orality and literacy running strictly along gender lines. Contributions of Jacob or Wilhelm Grimm in all probability consisted of fragments found in books[53]. After all, Jacob spent most of his time in the library and showed more interest in medieval mythology than in contemporary storytelling. Wilhelm will undoubtedly have recited fragments of the *Altdänische Heldenlieder* he was preparing during these years. The girls, each in their own way, told what they had read, too[54]. Most likely, they also went further and incorporated elements they had heard, from each other and from the brothers. Although this was an oral exchange, it was still cemented in the reading of existing texts.

## *VI*

The Grimms presented the published version of *Hänsel und Gretel* as a composition from several Hessian tales. It was also very much a conglomerate. And it can be seen as a collaboration between the Hassenpflug sisters and Dortchen Wild, orchestrated, as it turns out, by Marie Hassenpflug – the place of origin 'Hesse' can refer to the Wild sisters as well as to stories the Hassenpflugs 'discovered' in Kassel where they lived since 1798. Dortchen gave Wilhelm Grimm her additions to *Hänsel und Gretel* on 15 January 1813, when the first KHM edition was still fresh[55]. The earliest known form already existed in 1810; it was one of the texts sent to Brentano. At that point some of Marie's stories had already been recorded, but hardly any of Dortchen or Jeanette. The different elements *Hänsel und Gretel* was built of had mainly French characteristics and French stories were the speciality of the Hassenpflugs. Jeanette told most of the Perrault stories, especially those that had been adapted for the stage. Marie was equally familiar with Perrault; both sisters probably encountered his stories in their French lessons. Dortchen may have known Perrault's booklet (she certainly listened to his tales) but did not refer to him in her own stories.

In *Der Okerlo* the hero switches the head gear of the cannibal's offspring; in addition seven-league boots figure in the chase. These details ultimately derive from d'Aulnoy, but will also have been recognizable as parts of the end of Perrault's *Petit Poucet*. It must therefore have been relatively simple to take the beginning of this last story to construct yet another one about a boy and a girl in the house of

[53] The observation by Kamenetsky (above, note 8) 114 that Jacob contributed seventeen and Wilhelm nine 'folktales' to the 1812 KHM edition, is completely without ground.

[54] According to Rölleke in his comments to Dortchen Wild's memories, it is impossible to identify what books she had exactly used as a source for the stories she told her later husband; see id.: Erinnerungen Dortchen Grimms in der Aufzeichnung ihrer Tochter Auguste. In: Brüder Grimm Gedenken 15 (2003) 1–15. By the time she related her memories, orality had become official dogma. Textual comparison, however, can establish, for instance, that she read the 1801 Feen-Mährchen.

[55] Rölleke (above, note 6) 74f., 355.

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a cannibal – Marie's *Wassernix* exhibits an instance where the lovers are substituted by a brother and a sister. The next section of *Hänsel und Gretel*, the edible house (with hindsight the magical touch of the story), was borrowed from a *Bluebeard* narrative[56]. In all likelihood, this was the story Albert Ludwig Grimm had mentioned. The house of bread may have originated from Dortchen, since she had a grasp of non-Perrault *Bluebeard* stories such as *Fitchers Vogel* (KHM 46) shows. It would have given her the authority to later elaborate the exchange between the children and the witch[57]. This last addition constitutes another illustration of the interaction between the brothers and their female helpers. Already in December 1812 von Arnim, who had negotiated the Berlin publisher of the book, remarked that he missed the story of the 'Zuckerhäuschen' (gingerbread house, lit. house of sugar). He briefly summarized the most notable passage of the protagonists licking the house where the wolf lived and told that it was the wind. A month later Jacob replied that this was a part of *Hänsel und Gretel* and that in the meantime they had heard it in a more complete and better form; the children had answered: 'it is the wind, the heavenly child'[58]. They had obviously asked Dortchen and Marie about it and had subsequently been provided with the detail, which in its turn was a literary quotation, rather than some folkloric rhyme[59].

The fattening of Hans was paralleled in *Der Okerlo*, where the prince is destined to be eaten. More significantly, however, the fattening motif is present in the *Pentamerone* story *Rosella*, when the prince is pampered by the sultan to sweeten his blood. This can be ascribed to Marie again, as she retold another story from the *Bibliothèque universelle des Romans* on 13 September 1812[60]. The oven episode was mirrored on d'Aulnoy's *Finette Cendron* (1697), which has a *Cinderella* ending but starts with three sisters left in the wood and spending the night at the house of an ogre. Yet again the influence of Marie Hassenpflug can be suspected here, for she was the one to spice her stories with fragments from the work of the French woman: another d'Aulnoy detail, this time from *La Biche au bois* (1698),

[56] cf. Grätz (above, note 5) 201, who cites the opening rhyme of one of Fülleborn's "Schlesische Mährchen" (1797) which refers to "Herr Blaubart" and his "Pfefferkuchen-Haus". In a later "Bluebeard" variant from Antwerp, the murderer also inhabits a gingerbread house; see De Mont, Pol/De Cock, Alfons: Wondervertelsels uit Vlaanderen. Zutphen 1924, 322 – possibly going back to a broadsheet or a songtext.

[57] I have borrowed the notion of non-Perrault "Bluebeard" narratives from Scherf (above, note 1) 96. The concept may, of course, only apply to nineteenth- and twentieth-century texts. Dortchen may have been inspired by Münch's "Mährleinbuch für meine lieben Nachbarleute" (1799), which contained both similarities with "Hänsel und Gretel" and stories about murderers of women, see Grätz (above, note 5) 249f.

[58] Steig (above, note 51) 263f., 271. In German it rhymes: "es ist der Wind, das himmlische Kind".

[59] Rölleke (above, note 6) 355, mentions a medieval Spielmannsepos.

[60] See Schenda's observations in his edition of the Pentamerone: Das Märchen der Märchen [...]. München 2000, 505, 601f. "Pervonto" was retold by Marie Hassenpflug as "Hans Dumm" (no. 54 in KHM 1812), later discarded. Scherf (above, note 1) 565 assumes an oral tradition because of deviations from the literary texts, but merely retelling already accounts for this.

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is visible in her rendering of Perrault's *La belle au bois dormant* (1697)[61]. Jeanette certainly had read d'Aulnoy, too, but her sister understood the Grimms' (and especially Jacob's) dislike of the French novelist much better and only inserted fragments of her stories into her own. Finally, the duck who was still absent in the 1812 KHM edition, was squeezed in through the Magic Flight version of *Hänsel und Gretel*, which the Grimms obtained after the first volume had appeared, possibly already in 1813. As this element especially echoes *Der liebste Roland*, one may sense the hand of Dortchen Wild in this.

The composite elements in the early version of *Hänsel und Gretel* nevertheless point specifically to Marie Hassenpflug; Dortchen Wild's contributions seem merely supplementary. Far from labouring with 'a dying oral tradition'[62], Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm noted down fledgeling stories that were assembled because they had asked for it. As their texts show, Marie Hassenpflug and Dortchen Wild (just to mention the most important) cannot be seen as the passive bearers of an age-old tradition. Through the gender dynamics in their meetings with the brothers Grimm, the young women exercised their own agency, by giving their own twist to stories already in print.

## *VII*

Variation has always been championed as one of the main characteristics of orality. From that perspective the Magic Flight stories in the KHM, with or without *Hänsel und Gretel*, should be the pinnacle of orality. But a closer look reveals that the variation here is deliberate. It is too pronounced to be the product of a haphazard tradition. While all were composed around a central core, every detail, every motif in one story is different from the others. It is not just that Friederike Mannel's version alluded to the *Machandel=Bohm*, Dortchen Wild's to the *Jud im Dorn* and Marie Hassenpflug's to *Les fées*. Every flight is different, in sequence as well as in subject. In Friederike's *Fundevogel* the pair changes into a rosebush and a rose, into a church and a chandelier, and into a pond with a duck in it. In Jeanette's *Der Okerlo* it is a pond with a swan first, then a cloud of dust, and then a rosebush and a bee. Dortchen's *Der liebste Roland* has a lake and a duck (but now the boy becomes the bird and the girl the water) and then a flower plus a violin player. Even the bean which answers the questions in *Der Okerlo* (in *L'oranger et l'abeille* it answers the witch's questions rather than the girl's), is replaced

[61] Rölleke, Heinz: Die Stellung des Dornröschenmärchens zum Mythos zur Heldensage. In: Siegmund, Wolfdietrich (ed.): Antiker Mythos in unseren Märchen. Kassel 1984, 125–137, esp. 131; cf. Neemann, Harold: Schlafende Schönheit (AaTh/ATU 410). In: Enzyklopädie des Märchens 12. eds. Rolf Wilhelm Brednich et al. Berlin/New York 2005, 13–19.

[62] The quotation is from Ward, Donald: New Misconceptions about Old Folktales: The Brothers Grimm. In: McGlathery (above, note 41) 91–100, here 95; cf. Schenda (above, note 5) 151 on the time metaphor.

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by drops of blood in *Der liebste Roland* and by spittle in the flight version of *Hänsel und Gretel*.

It is unlikely that these differences resulted from the brothers' reconstructing and editing; their aim was to collect variants, not to invent them. No doubt they told their female friends exactly that they were hoping to find different details. Jacob and Wilhelm asked for variation and their young helpers happily served them, with several intervals, one story after another. Since the young women had listened to each other's recitals, they were aware of the differences in their respective stories and capable to elaborate on them. The texts themselves, the time it took to record them, and the frisson caused by the fact that it involved marriageable young women feeding stories to men who were only slightly older, all contribute to the thesis that the earliest texts of the KHM were the product of the interaction between the brothers Grimm and the sisters Wild and Hassenpflug. When this is plausible in the case of the Magic Flight cluster, it might also apply to the other so-called 'oral' texts of the 1812 KHM volume. The circumstances resulting in the texts for the second volume of 1815 were slightly different, although Marie Hassenpflug and Dortchen Wild kept providing an occasional tale, alongside other members of the literary circle.

After the two volumes of the first edition, the Grimms refrained from interviewing informants and resorted again to excerpting existing publications, now next to texts provided by correspondents[63]. Some of these were also labelled 'oral', but this is equally questionable, as a historical analysis of (among other texts) the later Magic Flight stories may indicate. Dialect texts were no guarantee of orality either: *Hänsel und Gretel*, to mention but one example, was translated into Alsatian dialect from the KHM, and subsequently reworked by Wilhelm Grimm into the main text[64]. In the course of the development of the KHM it refertilized itself through the insertion of pieces that were derived from the earlier editions[65]. There is no reason to suspect that the later versions of *Hänsel und Gretel* as published by younger generations of German folklorists, were not taken from the KHM or from Ludwig Bechstein's initially more popular *Deutsches Märchenbuch* (1845), or generated through Humperdinck's opera of the same name of 1893. The stories were also habitually read in schools. Even the 1822 and 1856 annotations to the KHM initiated retellings since the transformation-flight version of *Hänsel und Gretel* was distributed with its revealing detail of the witch who bursted by drinking the water from the pond[66]. In other countries translations of the KHM fur-

[63] Rölleke, Heinz: Grimms Märchen und ihre Quellen. Trier 1998.
[64] id.: August Stöbers Einfluß auf die Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm. Zur Textgenese der KHM 5 und 15. In: Fabula 24 (1983) 11–20.
[65] KHM 113 is composed out of elements of d'Aulnoy's work and the Pentamerone and it should also be kept in mind that Wilhelm Grimm left a copy of the first volume of the KHM in Bökendorf. By the time the pre-KHM versions of "Der Trommler" and "Die wahre Braut" were conceived, their authors had access to the Pentamerone extracts of the Grimms.
[66] e.g. Kuhn, Adalbert/Schwartz, Wilhelm: Norddeutsche Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche. Leipzig 1848, 319–321.

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nished material for later recordings[67], or may have done so[68]. Typically France and the British Isles did not have their own *Hänsel und Gretel* tradition[69]. In other words: it is extremely unlikely that the story ever existed independently from the KHM.

When *Hänsel und Gretel* became one of the most popular stories in Germany, it was not because it inhabited a centuries-old oral tradition[70], or that it recapitulated contemporary social realities, but because it had become German in its specific composition. It also conformed to a developing custom of reading stories to children. That was what the Grimms had intended all along.

*Abstract*

*Hänsel und Gretel* was a newly composed tale, primarily authored by Marie Hassenpflug with additions by Dortchen Wild. It was a variant of the Magic Flight stories in the KHM, which in the early 1800s were supplied mostly orally by the young female acquaintances of the brothers Grimm, but were based on fragments of existing literary stories. These assertions are substantiated by comparison of the earliest KHM versions with stories then in print (German, French, as well as Italian), by a reconstruction of the young ladies' repertoires, and by the assumption that instead of having been passive intermediaries they communicated as spirited, creative and self-conscious human beings.

*Résumé*

*Hänsel und Gretel* était un conte nouvellement composé, surtout par Marie Hassenpflug, avec des ajouts par Dortchen Wild. Il s'agit d'un conte appartenant au cycle de la Fuite

[67] cf. Van der Kooi, J.: Volksverhalen in Friesland. Lectuur en mondelinge overlevering: een typencatalogus. Groningen 1984, 253–256, 318 on the influence of the KHM on Frisian stories. The Dutch version collected by Gerrit Boekenoogen in 1892 is clearly based on the KHM; the sender also included a version of KHM 161 in the redaction of Wilhelm Grimm, see: Meder, Theo/Hendriks, Cor: Vertelcultuur in Nederland. Volksverhalen uit de Collectie Boekenoogen (ca. 1900). Amsterdam 2005, 345–347.

[68] James M. Taggart's assumption that Spanish and Mexican variants "probably evolved from an unknown prototype that existed in Spain at the time the European colonists immigrated to the New World" lacks any historical substantiation; see id.: "Hansel and Gretel" in Spain and Mexico. In: Journal of American Folklore 99 (1986) 435–460, cit. 435f.

[69] In France the versions listed under ATU 327 are mainly derivations of Perrault's "Petit Poucet" or d'Aulnoy's "Finette Cendron", see Delarue, Paul: Le conte populaire français 1. Paris 1957, 306–328. The situation in the United Kingdom is similar, see Briggs, Katherine: A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales A 1. London 1970, 154f., 400–403.

[70] The oral texts Scherf discerns (EM) will only have become oral in the course of the nineteenth century. A version from Groningen, for instance, recorded in 1957 (published in Neerlands Volksleven 7 [1957] 75–76; the Dutch language text in De Haan, Tj.W.R.: Smeulend vuur. Den Haag 1974, 77–81 is a reworking by the editor) is presented as belonging to a lower-class oral tradition, as it misses the house of candy. If transmitted within the narrator's family, its origins are lower German and it may well be considered as a simpler version of a KHM or the Bechstein edition.

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Magique qui est représenté par plusieurs variantes dans la collection des frères Grimm. Bien que contribués surtout oralement au début du XIX[e] siècle par des jeunes femmes appartenant au cercle des relations de la famille Grimm, ces contes se basaient sur des fragments d'histoires littéraires préexistantes. Ces assertions sont corroborées par une comparaison des premières versions des contes Grimm avec des contes (allemands, français, italiens) imprimés de l'époque, par une reconstruction des répertoires des jeunes femmes et par la supposition que loin d'avoir été des intermédiaires passifs, elles avaient agi en tant que personnes vivaces, créatrices et sûres d'elles-mêmes.

## *Zusammenfassung*

*Hänsel und Gretel* war ein neugedichtetes Märchen. Seine Autorin ist vor allem Marie Hassenpflug, Zusätze steuerte Dortchen Wild bei. Es handelt sich um eine Variante der Geschichten von der Magischen Flucht in den KHM, die den Brüdern Grimm Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts vorwiegend mündlich von jungen Frauen aus ihrer Bekanntschaft zugetragen worden waren, jedoch auf Fragmenten literarischer Erzählungen basierten. Dies erhärtet sich durch Vergleich der frühesten KHM-Versionen mit damals gedruckt erhältlichen (deutschen, französischen, italienischen) Erzählungen, durch Rekonstruktion der Repertoires der jungen Damen und durch die These, daß sie weniger passive Vermittlerinnen als lebhafte, kreative und selbstbewußte Persönlichkeiten waren.

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